

MEMORANDUM THRU CHAIRMAN, DNSS  
DEAN OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS  
DEPUTY COMMANDANT  
FOR COMMANDANT

SUBJECT: Strategic Staff Rides


1. This memorandum examines the feasibility of conducting a strategic-level staff ride for the Class of AY 94 prior to the end of the academic year.
2. It is feasible to conduct excursions which may be billed as strategic staff rides for the class of AY 94. These staff rides will be expensive( \$75-80K), require significant planning and preparation by both students and faculty, and impact on scheduled activities. Planning considerations are provided at Enclosure 1. At Enclosure 2 is a list of potential strategic staff rides with itineraries. Enclosure 3 is a rough approximation of costs. Not included are printing costs which may approach \$5K, assuming a modest printing requirement for maps and resource material.
3. Feasibility aside, I have reservations about accomplishing the objectives you have established for this project. In short, my concerns follow. Battles are generally conducted at the tactical level of war. They are discrete events with specific outcomes. Singly, or collectively, battles contribute to or deny operational objectives. Operational events, campaigns, achieve or fail to achieve, strategic ends. Generally, staff rides are focused at the tactical level of war. We incorporate operational considerations in many of our staff rides through discussion of commander's intent, strategic situation, and, where possible, integration of tactical events to portray the elements of a campaign. Lee's 1862 invasion of Maryland is a good example of an operational staff ride. We follow Lee's moves and battles from Frederick, Maryland, through South Mountain to Harper's Ferry and on to the battlefield at Sharpsburg. Given the proximity of significant events within this campaign and a staff ride leader who imparts the operational perspective, an operational staff ride is feasible. Moving to the next level of war, the strategic level, and accomplishing the same end is considerably more difficult. Jomini's first definition of strategy is "war on a map." Although strategy can be portrayed on a map, seeing it on the ground is not easy. A strategic staff ride must cover on the ground the broad sweep of arrows on a map. While arrows cannot be seen on the ground, battlefields can, and inevitably anyone seeking to study strategy on battlefields will be hard pressed to see beyond tactics, even when led by the best staff ride leader. We can take the class on a series of staff rides and bill them as strategic staff rides, but simply calling them that does not make them so. Plainly stated, I do not believe strategy can be seen from the window of a bus.
4. In view of time available, costs, the effect on advanced courses and competing programs, alternatives to taking the entire class on strategic staff rides could include:

- Deferring the rides until next year when they could be integrated into the curriculum at large. This alternative would permit more detailed planning and preparation.

- Limiting participation in the rides this year to the Advanced Warfighting Students in lieu of the three-day campaign planning exercise at course end. This alternative would simplify the problems associated with planning (fewer numbers) and the participants would be receptive to the experience unlike the class at large, many of whom show little interest in either the operational art or the staff ride program.

- Send selected faculty rather than the class on strategic staff rides. Faculty representatives from the departments and historians could plan, prepare, and conduct a week-long strategic staff ride after the end of the school year as faculty preparation for conducting future strategic staff rides.

Encl  
as

  
L.J. FULLENKAMP  
COL, FA  
Director, Military History

**SUBJECT: Strategic Staff Rides**

1. This enclosure provides planning considerations and recommendations on strategic staff rides.
2. **TASK:** Plan and conduct of strategic staff rides of Civil War campaigns for the resident class during the period 18-19 May. Staffs rides are intended to encompass strategic and operational planning and execution. Time and distance for any given ride should not exceed what can be accomplished in a two-day period, thus limiting selection of campaigns to the eastern theater of war.

**3. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **Objectives:** Have students gain an appreciation for strategic, operational, and tactical linkages; enhance knowledge of the operational art; gain a greater appreciation for insights which can be derived from the staff ride process.

- **Time:** Two days have been set aside for this project. More time is needed. Students must be well-briefed on the project and given adequate time to prepare for participation in the ride. Additional time is needed for back briefs on the insights gained during the rides. A 45-minute briefing in Bliss Auditorium should suffice to prepare students, provide them with the concept of the operation, objectives, and student requirements. A three-hour seminar upon return will be needed for brief backs. The Dean indicates time is available.

- **Student Preparation:** Active learning methodology demands that students be fully prepared to contribute to the learning process. Unlike tactical staff rides where the staff ride leader guides students, rides of this scope will necessitate that students be active players in the planning and conduct of the ride. As with an exercise of the complexity commensurate with Capstone, students must be fully read into the strategic situation and have a firm grasp of the details of the operational events within the campaign(s). Student preparation will be an additional requirement during Term III advanced Courses and inevitably will cause some hard feelings among students and faculty who resent the interference with advanced courses.

- **Faculty Preparation:** Faculty staff ride leaders are critical to the success of this project. We must not underestimate the time that will be required on the part of those selected to lead these rides. Leaders will be responsible for focusing students during the preparation phase and keeping them on course during the execution phase. In some instances, guides will have to develop supporting material for those rides for which we have no War College staff guide. Reconnaissance trips to the battlefields will be necessary. The faculty staff ride leader must be prepared to lead and conduct the strategic staff ride in a fashion different from tactical staff rides. The leader must know the strategic situation, the strategy, campaigns, geography and battles in order to conduct the ride and accomplish the intended objectives. Selection of the right leaders is key and, once selected, they must be afforded time and resources to prepare. Unless both leaders and students are given the time

*Enclosure 1*

and resources needed to gain the strategic perspective, any staff ride directed to that end will fail to achieve its stated objectives.

- Read ahead packets. There was no formalized process or staff which determined strategy in the civil war: the whole process went on in the commander's mind. The only way to enter the commander's mind at this stage is through a careful reading of his letters and orders to the president, and principal subordinates. Material must be identified for student use. Selected readings must be prepared for each staff ride on both Northern and Southern strategies, and an analysis made of the strategic and operational dimensions of the planning and execution of the campaigns to achieve intended strategic ends. In hand we have War College staff ride books for Gettysburg, Antietam, and Fredericksburg-Chancellorsville. Jay Luvaas has notes to support a Wilderness-Spotsylvania staff ride. Additional work remains to be done on the strategic dimensions of these campaigns.

- Campaigns Selected: Selection of campaigns is critical to the success of the project. Although the intent is to portray strategic events, much of what students will see is on the battlefields, and therefore tactical, thus the selection of battlefields which feature prominently in campaigns of true strategic significance is foremost among planning considerations. Moreover, because staff rides must be completed within a two-day period, inclusive of travel time, one-way driving time should be limited to five hours or less to permit maximum time on site. A recommended list of campaigns is found in Enclosure 2.

- Staff Ride Leader Preparations: Staff ride leaders will be required to conduct a reconnaissance of their assigned staff ride route and selected battlefields prior to leading the ride. In some instances more than one trip may be necessary.

- Competing Demands for Students and Faculty:

- Capstone: Some recommended staff ride leaders are committed to Capstone thus limiting planning time available to them.

- Term III Advanced Courses.

- Staff Ride Texts in progress: Dr. Luvaas, COL Bowman, and I are working to fulfil a commitment to the publisher to complete the Shiloh Staff Ride text by July. We will have to renegotiate the commitment in view of the demands associated with preparing for this project.

- General Headquarters Planning Exercise, Phase 3 will conflict for approximately 20-30 students and faculty.

- Currently scheduled weekend staff rides may have to be cancelled to permit planning and preparation for this project.

- Expenses: DAA's planning estimate for costs associated with the trip are \$78,100. See Enclosure 2 for a breakdown of costs. These cost figures assume a two-day trip for the entire class.

- Meeting student Expectations: Compulsory staff rides do not enjoy the same success as rides participated in by volunteers. Not everyone will participate in this project

with the same degree of enthusiasm. Not all students will be convinced of the merits of the project.

- Administration: Planning and execution of this project will involve all departments, the Dean and the Secretary.

--Lodging and administrative planning for various RON sites must begin immediately. Additional secretarial support to assist in coordinating details and producing read ahead packets, etc. will be required.

--Maps. Reprints of selected maps from the Official Records and the West Point Atlas maps will be necessary and reproduction and printing costs must be charged to the project.

#### **4. PLANNING TIME LINE:**

- 20 May, 0830-1130: Conduct back briefs in seminar on insights derived from staff rides.
- 18-19 May, 0730-1800: Travel to and from selected campaigns and participation in staff rides.
- NLT 17 May: Selected Staff ride leaders complete preparations to include visits to battlefields for orientation and route reconnaissance.
- NLT 4 May: Assign selected tasks and readings to students. Thirty minute presentation in Bliss Auditorium for the class detailing concept, scope, and objectives.
- NLT 18 April: Contract lodging and buses.
- ASAP: Select campaigns  
Identify Staff Ride Leaders  
Assemble Selected readings/bibliographies  
Gain final approval from Commandant on Plan

**SUBJECT: Strategic Staff Ride, Campaigns and Leaders**

**1. Criteria used to select campaigns:**

- Battles and campaigns must have clear strategic significance.
- There must be something to see. Certain campaigns, although interesting, are lost to the encroachment, development, and urban sprawl.
- Staff guides or sufficient background material must be available to facilitate adequate preparation of students and, more importantly, staff ride leaders and faculty.
- Destinations must be within 5-hour driving distance. Spending more time than this going to or returning from the battlefields is not the best use of time.

**2. Four campaigns meet the above listed criteria:**

- Gettysburg Campaign. Begun in Virginia, the ride would follow Lee's route into Pennsylvania, west of the mountains and the Union forces east of the mountains. The second of the two buses on this ride would follow the Union forces into the Gettysburg area. Ride would end with Lee's retreat and withdrawal into Virginia.
- Antietam Campaign. Begun in Virginia at Second Bull Run, the ride would follow Lee to Frederick, MD, up through Battle of South Mountain and down to the capture of Harper's Ferry. Hill's march to Sharpsburg, the battle, and Lee's withdrawal into Virginia.
- Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville: Union strategy is "On to Richmond." Lee's strategy is strategic defense. The two battles are significant events impacting on the strategy during a seven month period.
- The Wilderness Campaign: Grant's "On to Richmond" strategy. Ride follows Grant and looks at his offensive and Lee's defensive maneuvers. Grant's over arching strategy is laid out and discussed while the focus remains on the army with Grant.

**3. Two buses (8 total) with approximately 40 students and faculty per bus would be dedicated to each of the four campaigns.**

**4. Staff ride leaders.**

**-The criteria used to select the staff ride leaders included:**

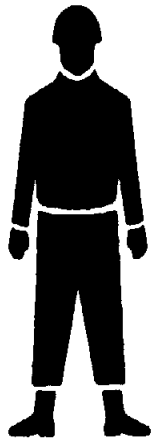
- Prior experience at leading staff rides
- Knowledge of the Civil War, strategy and operational art.
- Availability and interest.

*Enclosure 2*

**-Recommended staff ride leaders: Availability of individuals on this list is problematic. Some are involved in projects which will render them unavailable. They are included to demonstrate consideration. Eight (8) leaders, as a minimum, will be needed.**

- Dr. Jay Luvaas (Capstone)**
- COL Boone Bartholomees (Civil Affairs Panel Sponsor)**
- COL Jeff Davis (DCS)**
- COL Tom Walsh (DCS)**
- COL Charles Heller (SSI)**
- COL Steve Bowman (MHI)**
- Dr. Doug Johnson (SSI, FM100-1)**
- COL Barrie Zais (Dept Head, Capstone)**
- COL Bob Killebrew (Capstone)**
- COL Ty Trainor (Capstone)**
- COL Joe Tyo (Capstone)**
- COL Jack Mountcastle (SSI)**
- LTC Bill Johnsen (SSI)**
- LTC Dave Benjamin (DAA)**
- COL Len Fullenkamp (Capstone)**

**COSTS ESTIMATE**  
**(Class Staff Ride to Area Battlefields)**



304 Students  
76 Faculty  
20 Staff  
400 Total

|                                 | <u>Item</u>         | <u>Costs</u>     |  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--|
| Hotel Costs                     | Single Rooms        | \$ 100           |  |
|                                 | Double Rooms        | \$ 20,000        |  |
|                                 | Suites              | None             | \$50 x 1 night x 400 pers =<br>\$ 20,000 |
|                                 | Admin Rm            | None             |  |
|                                 | Ball Room           | None             |  |
|                                 | Baggage             | None             |  |
| Meals, Per Diem and Other Costs | Per Diem            | \$ 28,000        | \$35 x 2 days x 400 pers =<br>\$ 28,000  |
|                                 | Planning Trips      | \$ 2,000         |  |
|                                 | Miscellaneous       | TBD              |  |
|                                 |                     |                  |  |
| Travel Costs                    | <u>Bus Contract</u> | <u>\$ 28,000</u> | \$14,000 x 2 days =<br>\$ 28,000         |
|                                 |                     |                  |  |
|                                 | Total               | \$78,100         |  |